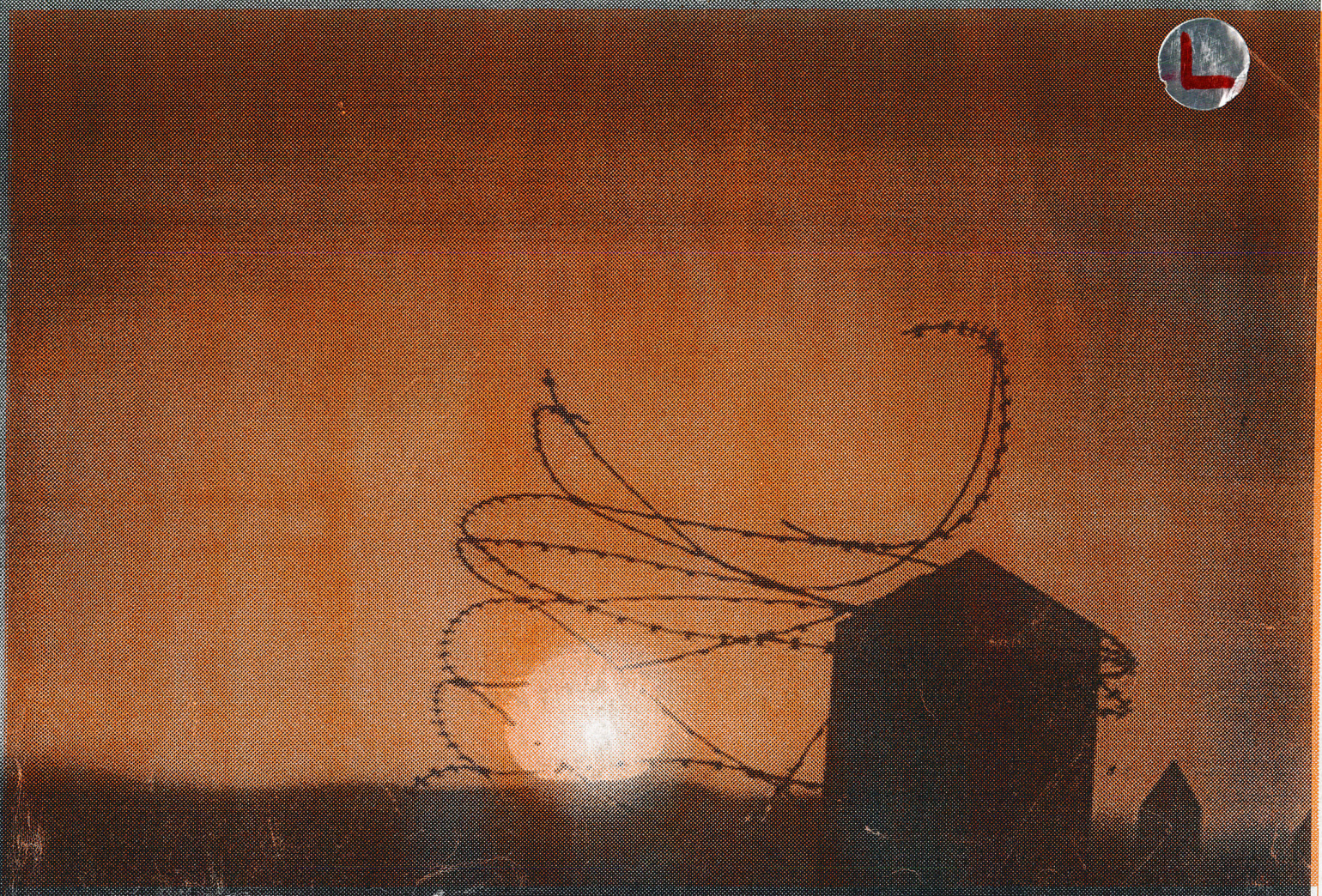


since we last met...

No more boats have landed. Meanwhile, the government is intensifying its program of forcing people who have exhausted the appeals process to leave Australia voluntarily. People from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran are particularly under pressure. There are hundreds of people in detention who have not been given visas to stay, yet cannot be deported to their home countries, because these refuse to accept forced returners. People are literally indefinitely incarcerated in the desert camps.

The first Temporary Protection Visas expired in November. Fear is spreading amongst communities that new visas will not be granted. Letters from the government have been sent to every man, woman and child informing them, that unless they can show again why they deserve protection, they are no longer welcome here. Already, one man is dead from suicide.

Inside the detention centres the struggle for freedom is intensifying in response. Hunger strikes continue. Fires at Port Hedland, Villawood, Woomera and Baxter over the New Year are testimony to the strong will to resist by any means. Nauru detention centre has become, for a short while, liberated space, with guards unwilling to enter in the face of resistance. Others have escaped detention. Six people escaped Woomera detention centre in early February, but were later recaptured. Yet many have also left, over 500 people coerced into returning to Afghanistan, their situation here so intolerable that to return is less horrific. This is the explicit goal of government policy.

People with Temporary Protection Visas are also organising. Hundreds of Iraqi TPV holders have self-organised to oppose the imposition of permanent semi-legality. Actions are being planned. Connections are being created.

Yet, with only few notable exceptions, Australian activists seem paralysed, fearful, frightened of losing. We are watching from the side lines, as the struggle between the government and those seeking legal status intensifies.

It is time to again come together. To reclaim our own humanity from the silent despair.

CALL TO ACTION

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

Lilla Watson

National borders shifted to restrict immigration. Offshore processing and detention. Forced deportations. No new recorded arrivals in over a year. The gradual phasing out of current onshore detention centres, and the relocation of those who have spent months and years in imprisonment.

Australia is not alone in fortifying its borders. All over the world governments erect walls of concrete and razor wire, install high tech security equipment and employ computerised surveillance systems to protect their power and privilege from those seeking a better life. In an increasingly globalised world Capital moves freely, but not people.

A new state-of-the-art militarised centre at Baxter. In order to reverse the negative community perception of mandatory detention, gone is the razor wire. But the barriers still remain.
An electric fence secures the border.

Solid fences within the camp are erected not for containment but to increase isolation. From the inside all that can be seen is the sky. Separate compounds divide friends and family.

The invisibility of those inside is made possible by locating the "detention facility" in the desert. Information barriers are strictly policed by the state and the private corporation that profits from incarceration. Letting the imprisonment of those inside go unchallenged will only strengthen the forces that control the lives of people on both sides of the fence.

Having risked their lives in coming here seeking freedom, many people inside the camps risk further imprisonment, deportation and even death in challenging their detention. They join thousands of people world-wide who riot, self harm, light fires and destroy compounds in protest against and in defiance of their incarceration.

As the people inside escalate their struggle, so shall our struggle escalate in solidarity. For we are part of a global movement, fighting for the right of all people to move and to stay.

This Easter we will converge at Baxter. We will take action in solidarity with our brothers and sisters inside the camps. Through civil disobedience we will make contact and challenge the barriers that divide us. Join us.

Ours will be part of many actions that are planned for the Baxter protest from April 18 - 20. Direct actions, media, radio, vigils, workshops, music. For more information www.baxter2003.baxterwatch.net

No One Is Illegal
February 2003

behind the electric fence at baxter

163 adult men
33 adult women
44 children
240 people
[February 17, 2003]

Baxter Detention Centre is located on Old Whyalla Road, 12 kilometres away from Port Augusta, 275 kilometres away from Adelaide, South Australia. It is located on El Alamein Army Camp.

Baxter is growing. It has the capacity to hold up to 660 people. People from Curtain, Woomera and other onshore detention centres are being progressively moved to Baxter, often against their wishes.

Behind the electric fence, hidden from sight, DIMIA has created its own Jika Jika [1], people are isolated into small compounds under constant video surveillance. Strip searches are a constant feature if people visit each other in different compounds (after receiving written permission each and every time) – women and men forced to strip in front of guards, spread their cheeks, squat. Ritual humiliation.

People are held in isolation units as punishment. Recent 14 Iranian men were held in isolation for more than days and only released after they began slashing the bodies.

Behind the fence, away from the media, people are bei driven mad. Baxter has been purpose built to bre people. Like high security, high technology prisons every country in the world they are sites of psychologic and physical torture.

1. www.theage.com.au/text/article/2003/01/08/1041989997633.htm

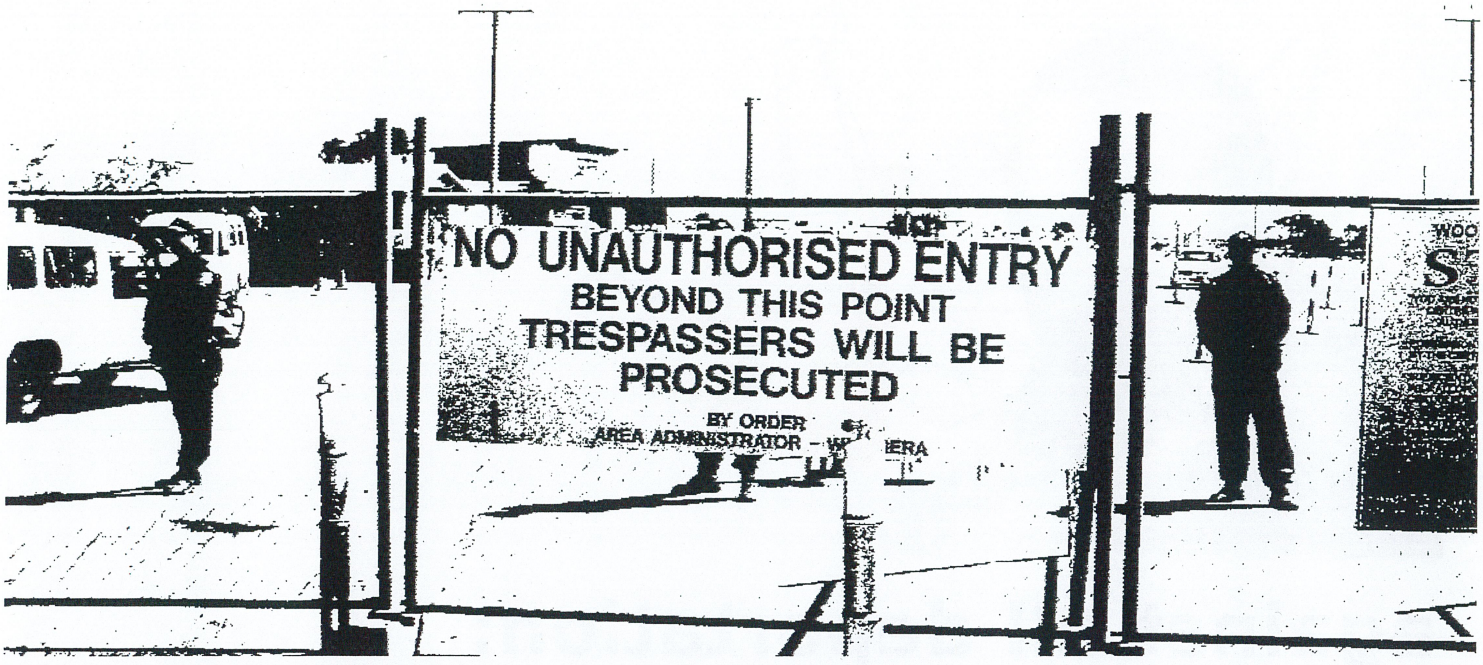
radio free baxter

april 18-20, 2003

Not all the walls at Baxter are visible. Communication with people inside is disrupted by a wall of media blackouts, lack of phone access – the inability for those of us on the outside to hear the people on the inside – the inability for those of us on the outside to be heard by those on the inside.

Radio Free Baxter is a project involving people from no one is illegal, community groups and radio geeks. It aims to hack the border, to let us communicate with each other, to talk in many languages, to exchange information.

Translators, radio folk, music heads and interested people are invited to help create Radio Free Baxter. To get involved contact Aamer: 0425 708 337



restore the commons :: open the borders

A man—a worker—risks death by machine gun to escape what he is told is a 'worker's state'. He flees East Berlin through a tunnel, dug beneath a cemetery.

A woman risks death by stoning to escape persecution and poverty under a regime installed by the CIA. She sells all she owns and leaves by boat.

In Australia concentration camps have been built to intern those who arrive from the global south. Their stories remain unheard. They ask if we know they are human.

Today those who choose to leave bear witness to another war –what Subcommandante Marcos has called " the fourth world war" – the war of neo-liberalism against humanity. In this war, as Marcos puts it:

"humanity is now the enemy. The Fourth World War is destroying humanity as globalization is universalizing the market, and everything human which opposes the logic of the market is an enemy and must be destroyed."

Those who end up in Australia's outback camps are the 'collateral damage' of this war. They are people whose very existence draws attention to the dismal failure of capitalism to provide the "democracy and freedom" it had promised throughout the cold war. As Stuart Rosewarne notes:

"The resurgence in the movement of people reflects the triumph of capital, but it also reflects its uneven development across the globe, and the upheaval consequent upon that triumph."[1]

Since the days of the enclosures, capital has expanded throughout the globe. What we know as globalisation is a world of globally integrated capitalism. Yet it would be mistaken to see capitalist expansion as merely spatial. Rather there is an attempt to colonise and commodify every aspect of our lives. Workers are monitored and surveilled—from finger scans to urine samples—, corporations like Monsanto patent 'brands' of rice or grain, ideas become 'intellectual property', our movement is regulated through borders and checkpoints, and anti-capitalist protests, like those in Seattle and Genova are turned into expensive Playstation games like State of Emergency, in which you can join the "Freedom Movement," cover your face with a black bandanna and throw molotov cocktails at the "American Trade Organisation."

But within this dystopic picture, there is another story—or perhaps the same story— the story of resistance. This is the story of the dignity of the Zapatistas, of thousands of Brazilian peasants re-occupying their land, of workers' councils in Argentina, general strikes in Italy and 'riots' within Australia's concentration camps. This is a story that exists on a smaller scale within each workplace and within every one of us. Those who cross the borders are a part of this story: a part of the refusal of capital's enclosures and domination, and the struggle for a world that is not defined by the imposition of work.

As Linebaugh and Rediker say:

"The globalizing powers have a long reach and endless patience. Yet the planetary wanderers do not forget, and they are ever ready from Africa to the Caribbean to Seattle to resist slavery and restore the commons." [2]

To restore the commons is to resist capital's enclosures. To restore the commons is to refuse to be defined by capital's borders. But to restore the commons is to do more than simply escape. Rather it is to create a new world. In our refusal we should all be 'economic migrants', refusing to stay where we can be best exploited. In creating a new world we should learn from those who have come so far and risked so much.

One such man, who escaped from Woomera at Easter, only to be later recaptured, said to me, as we smoked cigarettes in a tent in the desert: "Thank-you. You are doing something really worth humanity." Today, to resist is to fight for that very humanity, against a system that attempts to dehumanize us all. This man talked of those inside Woomera—people who are called by numbers not names— as the "people anonymous". I was struck by the extent to which this is what we all are to capital: "people anonymous, 'human resources', any pair of hands will do". Yet through our struggles we can begin the journey towards a world where no one is anonymous, and create a world in which each of us can be fully human.

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1. Rosewarne, S "Globalisation: The New Migrations", *Overland,* Spring, 2001, p32.
2. Linebaugh and Rediker; *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and tthe Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic.* Beacon, Boston, 2000, p353

against all deportation: for the right to move and to stay

Deportations are occurring today. People are chemically sedated, packed on planes and forced to leave Australia. Some die during their transport. Many more deportations are planned for this year. Having succeeded in its mission to stop people from arriving in Australia by boat through shifting borders, using the military to intercept boats, and indefinite detention in desert camps, the Australian government has gone on the offensive to clear those who have already arrived without papers from these shores.

Last week 200 Afghani people living in Australia on Temporary Protection Visas [TPV] attended a memorial service for three Afghan refugees killed after their forced return from Pakistan to Afghanistan. One of the people who attended the service Habibullah Wahedy is now dead. He took his own life after receiving a letter from the Immigration department offering him $2000 to return to Afghanistan when his visa expires in April.

Over 8,600 people live on TPVs in Australia. The conditions for TPV holders were tightened even further after the Tampa. The aim is to punish and deter those who arrive in Australia without papers, to limit the right to stay for those 'deemed' refugees to 3 years. After that each person must apply again, and satisfy the Australian Government that they are 'still deserving' of protection. This process will be repeated over and over without any hope of permanent settlement in Australia. DIMIA makes clear on its website the intent of the policy: "they will never get permanent residence. Their families will never be able to join them. If they leave Australia, they cannot return." The first TPVs expired in November 2002. Many thousands of people face the potential threat of deportation.

They are not the only ones targeted for deportation 1,700 East Timorese have been living in Australia for up to 10 years, in a similar legal limbo. They have been living on bridging visas. Now most having been rejected for permanent protection due to the 'changed situation at home' and face forcible deportation this year.

In detention centres deportations are the only road out of hell offered by the Department for Immigration. Afghani and Iranian people locked up in detention centres are openly being offered money to leave. Less open are the beatings, the daily humiliations, the physical and psychological torture used to convince people that for them in this country there is no hope for survival. The government recently invited a delegation from Iran to visit Australia, to discuss arrangements for deportations. To date the Iranian and Afghan governments refuse to accept people who are forcibly deported. This fact has not stopped the Australian government from writing letters to all Iranian people held in detention telling them to leave voluntarily or be forcibly deported to Iran. 500 Afghani people have to date not been able to withstand the lies and coercion and have gone.

Consent obtained through torture is not consent.
Whether legitimised through legal or physical force of the state
no forced deportations: for the right to move and stay

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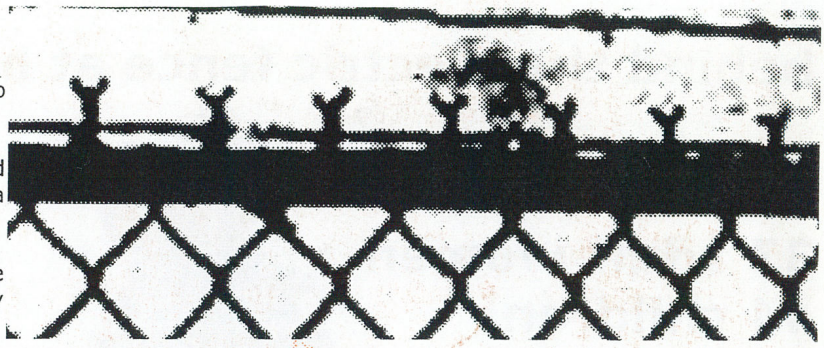
for more info check:
xborder http://www.antimedia.net/xborder
deportation alliance http://www.deportation-alliance.com/
online demonstration against deportations
http://www.geocities.com/demo4alles/uk/index.html

No One Is Illegal has taken on the task of coordinating the provision of some communal water in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone at the protest. However this in no way replaces the need for people to self-organise and bring with them plenty of water for their own consumption.

An estimated cost of providing a water tanker for the weekend is **$1500.** Obviously, this is a cost that will need to be shared. Donations to cover the cost of communal water can be made by **direct deposit** into cheque a/c BSB 063262 a/c no. 1026 6851 Commonwealth Bank, RMIT Carlton, a/c name no one is illegal or **post** to po box 432 Carlton South, VIC 3053.

no one is illegal



no one is illegal is a Melbourne-based collective acting to question borders in all their forms.

We are part of a loose network of groups around the world using the kein ist mensch illegal/ no one is illegal idea which began in 1997 at Documenta X.

We want to find answers to questions like: why are there borders? Do we need nations? Is a global community possible? How can we remove the barriers between us?

Capital derives its profit and power from the theft and plundering of the land and the exploitation of labour. Once this was organised by the colonial powers of Europe, now they are joined by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and Washington with their structural adjustment programs and free trade treaties. This means massive impoverishment of the global South, displacing millions of people from their homes and making the survival of billions harder and harder. Some countries are economically devastated, in others there is war and genocide. As the world is homogenised, the laws we live by are increasingly the values of the market place. And while there are few borders for trade and the movement of capital, restrictions on the movement of people are being tightened.

Our present focus is on the treatment of people who arrive in Australia without papers [www.antimedia.net/xborder]

We are inspired by actions throughout the world, both inside and outside the camps, and see ourselves as part of a global struggle against capitalist neo-liberalism and all its borders. We oppose a world where money and corporations are free to travel, but people are not. We believe people fleeing poverty and ecological degradation have as much right to move as those escaping dictatorship and persecution. We wish to join forces with others to end mandatory detention and to start creating the future now.

Often we use the slogans: open the borders : full rights for all migrants : close the camps as a shorthand for some of the changes in the world we hope to see.

We experiment with different methods and ways of bringing about change in society: civil disobedience, direct action, writing, speaking, and artistic interventions.

We come to consensus on our actions at fortnightly meetings on Mondays: 6pm @ Irene 5 Pitt St., Brunswick
next meeting 3rd March
[off Lygon St, tram 1/22, get off at Glenlyon Rd, then first left]

www.antimedia.net/nooneisillegal

logistics + contax

The Baxter Convergence will involve a camp near the detention centre, which will be the site for a diversity of actions and tactics. Setting up the camp will be our first act of civil disobedience. The land around Baxter is owned by the military.

Look out for updates on national organising
http://www.baxter2003.baxterwatch.net

making contact, getting involved:
Perth: Bec 0401 390 179 / Grant 0416 012 957
Brisbane: Gillian 0409 267 040 / Juz 0408 066 496
Newcastle: Vanessa 02 4968 1281
Sydney: Ash 0402 009 409
Canberra: Cathy catho@funnelwebinternet.com]
Adelaide: Elicia 0428 847 532 or Nat 0410 158 596

in Melbourne:
autonomous baxter network meets fortnightly at 5.3pm on Mondays at the Queensberry Hotel, cnr Queensberry/Swanston Str [Camille 0412 707 808] starting on Monday 24th Feb

victorian baxter network meets weekly at 7pm on Tuesday at Trades Hall Council, Carlton

organise an affinity group:
noone is illegal is an affinity group participating in the victorian baxter network and the autonomous baxter network. For safety, co-ordination of logistics and your actions it is a good idea to organise and travel in a affinity group [group of people you know and trust]

getting to Baxter:
Buses are being organised from most capital cities. To get on one call people in your states network. If you want to get on bus in Melbourne call Grace 0425 783 792. Book early if you want to make sure you have a place.

Car pooling is another option, if you want to drive up and have space in your car, or need to catch a ride check the rideboard at the baxter web site.

other stuff:
There are heaps of other logistical things to think about before you come – food, water, tents, legal, health issues. Keep in touch with the website or people from your state about getting access to convergence information before you make the trek.

Most importantly be clear about a few questions before you come to Baxter: Why are you going? What do you hope to achieve? What are the kinds of actions you are prepared to take and do?